



---

**OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

PO BOX 202501  
HELENA MT 59620-2501  
[www.opi.state.mt.us](http://www.opi.state.mt.us)  
(406) 444-3095  
(888) 231-9393  
(406) 444-0169 (TTY)

**Linda McCulloch**  
Superintendent

DATE: October 28, 2004

TO: School Food Authority Administrators

FROM: Christine Emerson, Director  
School Nutrition Programs

SUBJECT: Verification of Income Eligibility – Household Documentation of Income

Effective July 1, 2004, school officials verifying income eligibility for free and reduced-price meals must allow households to provide documentation of income for any point in time between the month prior to application and the time the household is required to provide income documentation. Although not addressed in the statute, this provision is in response to the guidance by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry to the Secretary during deliberations on the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

The "Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual" currently specifies that households selected for verification must document their income information for the most recent month available. That provision in the guidance is now superseded.

This provision is intended to support the concurrent statutory change that provides for full school year eligibility once an initial determination is made. The "Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual" will be updated to reflect this change.

Please call School Nutrition Programs at (406) 444-2501 with questions.